

# TRICARE *Europe* COMPASS



TRICARE Europe Office  
Unit 10310  
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## TRICARE Europe gets new Executive Director

by **CAPT Cynthia DiLorenzo, USN**  
*Deputy Executive Director, TEO*

The TRICARE Europe Office (TEO) welcomed its new Executive Director, Navy Captain Barb Vernoski, on August 6 with a visit by Army Brigadier

General Richard Ursone, TRICARE Europe Lead Agent, and a potluck luncheon.

CAPT Vernoski comes to TEO after serving as the commanding officer, Naval Hospital, Jacksonville, Fla. She was the first Nurse Corps Officer to serve as a commanding officer of a Naval hospital supporting a graduate medical education program.

Under her exceptional leadership, Naval Hospital, Jacksonville recaptured care back into the Military Treatment Facility (MTF), expanded healthcare services to the Fleet, carried TRICARE Region 3 in bid price adjustments, and won the 2000 Department of Defense Customer Satisfaction Award.

CAPT Vernoski brings a wealth of experience to her new position. She has a bachelor's of science degree in nursing and a master's of science degree in trauma and critical care nursing, with a Certificate in General Administration. She enlisted in the Navy in November 1971, and was commissioned an Ensign in December 1972. Her first assignment as a Navy Nurse was at the Naval Re-

gional Medical Center, Portsmouth, Va.

She served as a surgical staff nurse, a coronary care unit staff nurse, and was the command's Coronary Care Course Program Director. Some of her other assignments include serving in a variety of nursing staff positions, as guest lecturer for military nursing courses, and in coronary care and trauma units in a number of Navy MTFs.

CAPT Vernoski was assigned to the USNS COMFORT during its mobilization for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, serving as the Division Officer for the 50-bed casualty receiving trauma unit. She also spent 3 years at the Naval Medical Clinic Command, London, U.K., where one of her responsibilities included serving as the Executive Officer.

CAPT Vernoski has also served as the Commanding Officer of Fleet Hospital at Camp Pendleton, Calif., which mobilized to provide medical support in Honduras following Hurricane Mitch in 1998.

The staff at TEO looks forward to working with CAPT Vernoski as we all continue to implement, improve and refine the TRICARE Overseas Program throughout our area of responsibility. WELCOME CAPT Vernoski!

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*Often has the likely failed and the  
unlikely succeeded... Irish proverb*

# Grateful to serve alongside professionals working to improve on a 'great thing'

*New TEO Executive Director looking forward to making an already good benefit better*

by **CAPT Barbara Vernoski, USN**  
Executive Director, TEO

**W**e are living in very interesting times, times that challenge each of us to step back and assess where we are, and then envision our direction.

U.S. military medicine is in the forefront of large scale, sweeping changes in the American health care industry. We manage the largest health plan in the world, serving more than eight million beneficiaries ranging from newborns to octogenarians.

We are the only health maintenance organization in the world with the capacity and the mission to "go to war." We do everything expected of us and more.

We are ready for all contingencies; from out and out war, to peacekeeping missions, to taking care of the rescue workers at the site of the World Trade Center disaster.

We take care of our own and anyone else in need. We continually strive to improve our healthcare

delivery system. Many of us wear more than one "hat" and are responsible for multiple missions.

Through all of this, we work as a team with one goal in mind - to provide quality, cost effective, accessible health care to all beneficiaries.

I am excited about being here and look forward to working with each of you as we continue to improve our capability to provide healthcare in this unique, sometimes challenging, but always interesting overseas environment.

I have inherited a superb staff with an impressive list of accomplishments. Together, we are committed to making the TRICARE Europe Office a user-friendly resource, providing the services you need to get your jobs done. Having just come from being the Commanding Officer at Naval Hospital, Jacksonville, I know how important it is to have a Lead Agent Office that is responsive and supportive.

As we all continue to meet the many challenges that will face us in



*TEO photo by Bonita Ducharme*

**Navy Captain Barbara Vernoski, new TRICARE Europe Executive Director**

the future, my commitment to each of you is that my staff and I will do all we can to provide you the information, tools and support you need to deliver the quality medical care our beneficiaries have come to expect and deserve.

Finally, I want to thank you all for a job "Well Done" as you continued to provide healthcare within the restrictions that followed the stateside events of September 11. It truly is an honor to serve with such a wonderful group of professionals!

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# Lead Agent sends thanks to troops at treatment facilities throughout Europe

by **BG Richard Ursone**  
*TRICARE Europe Lead Agent*

The terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11<sup>th</sup> are difficult to comprehend. The reality of this tragedy impacts each of us. Added to the everyday stressors of work and family are, undoubtedly, intense feelings of pain for our fellow citizens and anger toward those who perpetrated these horrific acts.

I also know you're working harder than ever to deliver to our beneficiaries world-class health care, and I want to thank you, and let each and everyone of you know how much I appreciate your efforts.

From rescheduling surgeries and routine appointments to accommodating late arrivals and holding additional clinics, you were there proving what I've always known...the TRICARE Europe team has the best medical professionals serving America's finest.

Again, I thank you. You are the best!

# Acronyms often cause 'comm' failures, frustration when trying to learn the benefit

by **Jack Harrison**  
*Editor*

In this space each quarter, I hope to share with you a lighthearted view of something related to our daily world. This may or may not be TRICARE specific, but I'll try.

This quarter, I want to address the use of acronyms; those wonderfully convenient abbreviations most of us think the rest of the world understand, when in reality, most of the rest of the world, including me, don't have a clue.

I'm new to the TRICARE Europe family, arriving here in August. But I'm not so new to the military. After a 20-year career, I've forgotten more acronyms than most people ever read or hear about in a whole lifetime.

Or, so I thought before I came to the TRICARE Europe office (TEO). See? There's one right there. Not four paragraphs into this piece and already I'm spouting out acronyms. Well, at least I made sure it was accompanied by the three words it represents. Many people never explain, or define, what the acronyms stand for or mean.

Look, I know we have to have acronyms. They've become part of everyday language, and not just in the Department of Defense. Many are so familiar we think they're actual words rather than abbreviations. SCUBA, SONAR, RADAR and LASER are but a few that come to

mind. I'm not going to use the space here to explain what each of them mean, so you'll simply have to trust me that they are indeed acronyms.

When it comes to TRICARE, acronyms abound. There is PPN (Preferred Provider Network), HCIL (Health Care Information Line, which replaced the Personal Health Advisor, or PHA) and TEOB (the Tricare Explanation of Benefits). TRICARE has so many acronyms, an entire page of the TRICARE Europe Health Care Passport is devoted to explaining them to our beneficiaries. And, hey, when we use them along with an explanation, everything's fine. It's when we use them assuming everyone knows what they mean that problems begin to pop up.

So, if you're speaking to a group, try to never use acronyms. It'll help you get your point across. And when you are writing, always spell out the acronym first and then parenthetically show the abbreviation immediately following (I didn't follow that rule in this piece only for effect). You'll be doing everyone a huge favor, including me. As I said, I'm new to the internal workings of TRICARE and so far, it's been like trying to learn a completely new language. But I am learning.

And, by the way, as long as your host nation provider is listed on the PPN, calling the HCIL may not be as important as getting a reading from your TEOB.

Happy reading!

# Benefits Workshop:

## TRICARE Europe hosts nearly 200 in Mainz

by **Master Sgt. Ron Peoples**  
Deputy Chief, TEO Regional Ops

The last week of August heralded the long awaited 2001 TRICARE Europe Benefits Workshop, "Rowing Through the Currents of Change." The beautiful city of Mainz, Germany played host to 185 Health Benefits Advisors (HBAs), Beneficiary Counseling and Assistance Coordinators (BCACs), Debt Collection Assistance Officers (DCAOs), Managed Care officers, Remote Site Points of Contact (POCs), and Medical Service Coordinators from throughout Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

Army Brigadier General Richard Ursone, TRICARE Europe's Lead Agent, opened the workshop by challenging participants to learn as much as they could and to share their knowledge

and experiences with other participants. He also reminded the group of their ownership of the TRICARE Program, encouraging them to keep doing their best because our beneficiaries depend on them to make things happen.

Guest speakers from around the world came to Mainz to discuss key aspects of the TRICARE Europe Program. Their presentations were informative, helpful and sometimes humorous.

Kathy Gadda, manager of the Foreign Claims Branch at Wisconsin Physicians Service (WPS) gave a presentation covering the claims processing flow. She highlighted ways to help ensure accurate and timely claims payments.



TEO PAO photos by Bonita Ducharme

**Kathy Gadda, manager of the Foreign Claims Branch at Wisconsin Physicians Service, and Louis Parker, the Health Benefits Advisor at Wiesbaden Health Clinic, get together during a break in the action.**



**Master Sgt. Ron Peoples, Deputy Chief of TEO Regional Operations, receives a "Hero of TRICARE" award from Master Sgt. Wes Harden, TRICARE Management Activity, Falls Church, Va., at the TEO Benefits Workshop, Mainz, Germany, in August. Master Sgt. Peoples was recognized for his hard work in developing and implementing the regional Debt Collection Assistance Officer program.**

Judy Carroll, program analyst at the TRICARE Management

Activity (TMA), Aurora, Co., talked about the development, application and constraints of the TRICARE Overseas Program policy.

Air Force Lt. Col. Trish Gaulty, Senior Health Program Analyst at TMA, Falls Church, Va., gave an update on the new benefits from the 2001 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which came on line October 1, and the TRICARE Plus Program. Also from the Falls Church TMA office, Air Force Master Sgt. Wes Hardin, Beneficiary Education Coordinator, talked about the new DCAO web portal reporting tool, and the latest information on TRICARE University.

Richard Groccia, the Regional Federal Benefits Officer at the American Consulate in Frankfurt, Germany, outlined the Medicare enrollment process and briefly discussed benefits for

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## More Workshop from pg. 4

Americans living in Germany.

Rounding out the presenters from around the world,



TEO PAO photos by Bonita Ducharme

**Sean Glover, TEO Regional Operations, discusses the Claims Management System at the TEO Benefits Workshop.**

got in on the action early and often, too. Air Force Maj. Tom Haines. TEO's Chief of Regional Operations, served as the Master of Ceremonies for the workshop. He also took time to discuss the workshop theme and gave a TRICARE Europe overview.

Air Force Lt. Col. Liz Robison, Chief of Health Care Operations at TEO, discussed the process for behavioral health referrals. Army LTC Bea Stephens, also from Health Care Operations, presented information about the Host Nation Customer Comment Card.

Navy LCDR Steve Keener, Director of TEO's Remote Site Health Care, held a special breakout session with

Air Force Capt. Dawn Coley, the Diagnostic and Therapeutics Flight Commander at Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, provided conference attendees an enlightening and fun-filled presentation about how to improve in the area of customer service.

TRICARE Europe office (TEO) staffers

POCs from remote sites throughout the TRICARE Europe area of responsibility.

The specifics of the TRICARE Europe Prime benefit and eligibility was covered by Uli Engel, a TEO Program and Benefit Specialist. She also talked about the Program for Persons with Disabilities.

Sean Glover, a Medical Service

Coordinator at TEO, discussed the functions and abilities of the Claims Management System. Another Medical Service Coordinator at TEO, Shane Pham, walked participants through the process of researching policy information on the web.

The workshop also served as the perfect opportunity to introduce Navy Captain Barbara Vernoski, the new TRICARE Europe Executive Director, who wasted no time jumping right in, providing encouraging words to the conferees during her opening remarks. She also gave an informative briefing about the history of TRICARE and our challenge to keep the torch burning strong.

The men and women in TEO's Regional Operations Division hope the Health Benefits Workshop was a success for participants and presenters alike. They are looking forward to the next opportunity to get together and share knowledge and information about the benefits offered by TRICARE.



**LCDR Steve Keener, TEO Regional Operations, talks about Remote Site issues at the Workshop.**

\*\*\*\*\* Mark your calendars \*\*\*\*\*

**October is Breast Cancer Awareness month!!**

Halloween is celebrated on Oct. 31  
Set your clocks back on Oct. 28  
All Saints Day is November 1st  
Veterans Day is observed on Nov. 12

The Great American Smoke Out is Nov. 15th  
Thanksgiving Day (U.S) is Nov. 22nd  
World AIDS Day is December 1st  
Christmas Day is on Dec. 25th

# TEO nurses bring diversity, experience

by **CAPT Cynthia DiLorenzo, USN**  
Deputy Executive Director, TEO

**T**his quarter, we want to introduce you to the nurses of the TRICARE Europe Office (TEO). When most people think of a TRICARE Lead Agent office, they probably think of administrators. However, no Lead Agent office can function well without the clinical background, knowledge and expertise of the nurses. The diverse backgrounds of our nurses provide us a tremendous opportunity here at TRICARE Europe - each of these highlighted people greatly contributes to the implementation and improvement of TRICARE throughout the region. So read on to meet the nurses of TRICARE Europe!

Lt. Col. Elizabeth Robison is an Air Force nurse and has the most tenure at TEO. Currently the Chief of Health Care Operations, she is responsible



**Lt. Col. Liz Robison**

for coordinating and facilitating the implementation of regional population health improvement programs within TRICARE Europe, including

utilization and quality management; primary care optimization; prevention; demand, disease, and case management; and clinical practice guidelines.

Lt. Col. Robison has extensive



TEO PAO photos by Jack Harrison

The "Nurses of TEO," from left to right, are **CAPT Rodney Fierek, LTC Beatrice Stephens, Lt. Col. Elizabeth Robison and LTC Muriel Metcalf**

experience as an active duty nurse.

Some of her most unique assignments include her tour at Clarke Air Force Base, Philippines, as a flight instructor for the 9<sup>th</sup> Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron; her assignment as the charge nurse and hyperbaric team member at the U.S. Air Force Clinic, Okinawa, Japan; and section commander and division director at the Air Force Squadron Officer School, Maxwell AFB, Ala. - the first nurse ever assigned to the faculty.

Her previous challenge prior to arriving here in the summer of 1998 was as the director of Utilization and Quality Management in TRICARE Region IV, where she was instrumental in the development and implementation of the TRICARE Senior Prime demonstration project.

A proven expert in the managed care and utilization management arena, Lt. Col. Robison has taught at the graduate level at the University of Alabama, Birmingham, and presented at the yearly TRICARE conferences sponsored by the TRICARE Management Activity (TMA). As an advocate for TRICARE, her goal is to ensure all of our beneficiaries receive quality, cost effective health care.

LTC Beatrice Stephens was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps in February 1983.

She joined the staff at TEO in July 2000 and is currently our Director of Health Plan Evaluation. Under her guidance and leadership, TEO has greatly improved the Regional Health Plan metrics, making the data more readable and customer friendly.

She has also worked closely with the three component services to develop a TRICARE Europe Report Card that will provide an accurate measurement of the success of

healthcare delivery in the TRICARE Europe region.

LTC Stephens has held a number of nursing positions in the Army,



**LTC Bea Stephens**

working in oncology, telemetry, medical intensive care, coronary care, and surgery.

She was assigned to the 121<sup>st</sup> Evacuation Hospital, Seoul, South Korea, gaining critical experience in trauma nursing.

She also served as the chief nurse in the U.S. Army Clinic at the Pentagon, gaining tremendous leadership and management expertise.

A proven professional, LTC Stephens brings her dedication,

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## **Nurses** from pg. 6

clinical expertise and leadership experience to her current challenges here.

LTC Stephens is the “go-to” person in our organization for the “tough” projects. Her critical thinking and her belief in the Military Health System and the TRICARE program make her a superb staff officer.

Navy Captain Rodney Fierek joined the TEO staff in December 2000. Commissioned an Ensign in 1973, CAPT Fierek has held a number of clinical and administrative positions in the Navy and within the Department of Defense.

His most recent assignment before joining our staff was at the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) Bethesda, Md., serving as the Director of Occupational and Community Health. He also served as Head of the Primary Care Service Line. In this capacity, CAPT Fierek was responsible for the implementation of TRICARE at the NNMC and its outlying clinics.



**CAPT Rodney Fierek**

In addition, he has worked as a staff officer for the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Services, Operations and Readiness), and at the Navy Surgeon's General Office at the Pentagon.

His other assignments in clinical nursing were at the Naval Regional Medical Center, Portsmouth, Va.; Naval Hospital, Yokosuka, Japan; Naval Hospital, Philadelphia, Pa.; and Naval Hospital, Newport, R.I.

Currently the Chief of TEO's Support Services Division, CAPT Fierek's clinical and administrative experiences, and his understanding of TRICARE at the “grass roots” level, make him the ideal staff officer to handle the unique issues routinely sent our way. He is

committed to “doing the right thing” for our beneficiaries, which is evident in all of his encounters with members of the staff, the line leadership and our beneficiaries. A Navy nurse with a breadth of experience, CAPT Fierek is a positive addition to TEO.

LTC Muriel Metcalf, an Army nurse, recently joined the TEO staff as the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Overseas Program Coordinator. She comes to us with a wealth of knowledge in community health nursing.



**LTC Muriel Metcalf**

LTC Metcalf's previous assignments in the Army include newborn nursing, cardiac intensive care nursing, and head nurse on the

Tropical and Communicable Disease Ward, 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Hospital, South Vietnam.

She took a break from the Army while her children were young and worked as a school nurse at the International School, Belgrade, Yugoslavia, and at the American Embassy there.

LTC Metcalf's varied assignments and unique experiences provide her the knowledge and understanding of program management required to coordinate, develop and implement the WIC-Overseas Program.

She is a compassionate professional with the ability to balance many responsibilities at one time. Her dedication and commitment to implementing WIC in this overseas environment is directly linked to the success of the program so far.

As she continues to implement WIC at the remaining sites throughout TRICARE Europe, we know our beneficiaries will surely benefit from that success.

TRICARE Europe is fortunate to have these multi-talented, dedicated professionals as part of the TEO staff. We thank our nurses for their commitment to, and enthusiasm for, TRICARE!

**Did you know...** during WWII, the U.S. observed daylight savings time from February 2, 1942 to September 30, 1945? A long time for long days!

# The evolution of Population Health

by Lt. Col. Liz Robison

*Chief, TEO Health Care Operations*

As the TRICARE Europe Office (TEO) aligns with population health efforts concerning optimization across the Military Health System (MHS), it is important to look for opportunities across our region to change some of the ways we do business.

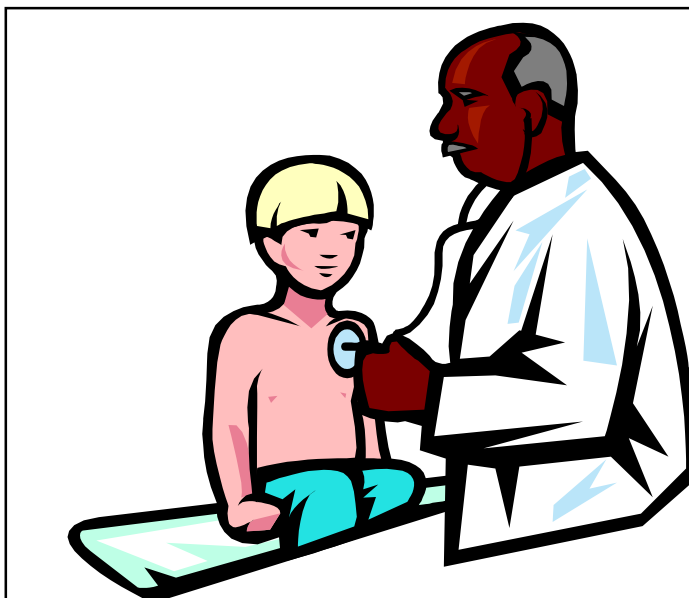
Recent changes initiated by TEO directly support the overall MHS focus on population health, addressing four principles for improving the health of military communities: define populations targeted by interventions; use applied epidemiology; use evidence-based interventions; and manage information to support health status assessment, planning and performance monitoring.

The overall changes are guided by the principle of providing a regional perspective to our population health improvements. In our efforts to focus on regional data and program management, we have moved programs that are supported by local efforts, back to the Military Treatment Facility (MTF) level for coordination and management.

The primary program involved is the Breast Cancer Initiative (BCI). TEO will no longer have a Regional Coordinator for BCI. This focus will shift to the local points of contact who are active at that level, coordinating efforts related to prevention and breast cancer awareness.

Additionally, the BCI Case Manager position is evolving into a Regional Case Manager position, which will be available to focus not only on breast cancer, but all high risk, complex cases across the region. When the new person settles in, more information will be sent to the MTFs about what the Regional Case Manager can provide to their staffs and beneficiaries.

Another change focuses on regional clinical data and how we can use it for population health improvements. To that end, Major Kevin Forrest, a new addition to the TEO staff, will oversee the data management aspects of population



health. MAJ Forrest is an Army Medical Service Corps officer with a background in the laboratory field, making him a great asset to the TEO Health Care Operations division. He has hit the ground running, undergoing training to learn about our primary data warehouse tool, the All Regional Server (ARS) Bridge.

Finally, a team of professionals, through a contract with Science Application International Corporation (SAIC), will conduct specific studies geared at learning how we are doing in the areas of prevention and disease management. This regional look will create opportunities to improve the processes at the clinical level, and reinforce local efforts to improve clinical outcomes using evidence-based medicine protocols.

We are excited about our new people and programs supporting TRICARE Europe's goal of enhancing the integration of population health, and the MHS optimization goal of addressing the needs of our beneficiaries through population health programs.

## The latest regarding Open Access

by COL Robert Larsen  
*Medical Director, TEO*

The TRICARE Europe Office (TEO) is working on an exciting new approach to access management. The pilot project is called Open Ac-

cess and its aim is simple: when a patient calls a clinic for an appointment, the only questions they will be asked are; "Who is your primary care manager (PCM)?" and, "May we offer you an appointment for today?"

This is a tremendous advance over

current processes. These often involve negotiating with the patient about whether they need an appointment, and then determining out how far into the future it is safe to delay that appointment. The first group of

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seven clinics is giving TEO enthusiastic feedback about Open Access and finds it to be an advantage for patients and staff.

Because of the success of the pilot project, TRICARE Europe is continuing to promote Open Access throughout our theatre by helping a second group of eight clinics. The two Navy, one Air Force and five Army clinics will be working with our contracted experts, Dr. Mark Murray and Ms. Jane Metzger, for the next six months. Their task will be made easier by a new web based support tool under development by the systems division at TEO.

This new tool will provide participating Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs) with the data they need to implement Open Access and monitor progress. In working to achieve open access, these clinics will be taking great strides toward MTF Optimization, which is the ultimate goal.

# Host Nation Comment Cards now ready for use

by LTC Bea Stephens

*Director, TEO Health Plan Evaluation*

TRICARE Europe health care professionals have a new tool to aid them in making sure our beneficiaries are receiving top-notch care.

The Host Nation Comment Cards is ready for use throughout TRICARE Europe. These cards were developed to help evaluate the medical care TRICARE Europe beneficiaries receive from host nation providers and the process for using the comment card is quite simple.

When someone is referred to a host nation provider, they will receive a letter signed by Army Brigadier General Richard Ursone, TRICARE Europe Lead Agent, and a copy of the comment card from the local Health Benefits Advisor.

After their medical appointment, the patient completes the card, folds it, staples it and drops it into a Military Postal Service mailbox.

The card is then forwarded to the TRICARE Europe Office, where our staff will compile and correlate the responses, and enter them into a secure database.

Points of contact, for example Patient Representatives, are assigned a logon access code authorizing them to retrieve the information and respond to beneficiary comments.

This logon database is scheduled for completion in October 2001. Therefore, managed care officers should have already identified a primary and alternate point of contact. If not, please email your selection's first and last name, email address and phone number to LTC Beatrice T. Stephens, director of Health Plan Evaluations at TEO, ([beatrice.stephens@sembach.af.mil](mailto:beatrice.stephens@sembach.af.mil)).

**Editor's Note:** The Host Nation Comment Cards are also available electronically by logging onto the TRICARE Europe website at <http://webserver.europe.tricare.osd.mil>.

## New arrivals help lead dental efforts

by Dr. George Schad

*Director, TRICARE Dental Program, TEO*

Two new arrivals to the European theater are certain to have an impact on dental care and the TRICARE Dental Program (TDP).

Army Colonel Conrad Bodai recently assumed duties as the European Region Dental Commander, Europe Regional Dental Command, Heidelberg, Germany. He comes from an assignment as the Dental Activity Commander at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Prior to that assignment he was the DENTAC commander at Wurzburg, Germany.

COL Bodai brings with him a wealth of knowledge and experience and is sure to be a welcome addition to the European dental community.

U.S. Air Forces Europe recently welcomed the second

new arrival, USAFE Command Dental Surgeon, Colonel Robert Tolefson. The Colonel comes from MacDill AFB, Florida, where he served as the Hospital Commander. Prior to that he was the Hospital Commander at Minot AFB, North Dakota, and Osan AB, Korea. He is an experienced leader bringing to Europe his knowledge and support of TRICARE medical programs into the dental arena.

These two Colonels join European theater dental hold-over, Navy Captain Jack Bowers. CAPT Bowers is stationed in Naples, Italy, and serves this year as the chairman of the European Dental Advisory Committee (DAC).

These three active duty dental officers work in concert with the TRICARE Dental Program Office at the TRICARE Europe Office, spearheading the effort to make the TDP a valued benefit for the military family members assigned to Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

# Women, Infants and Children:

Program moves into phase II,  
opens more offices in Europe

by LTC Muriel Metcalf

WIC Overseas Program Coordinator

The Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Overseas Program is smoothly sliding into Phase II. Choctaw Management Services Enterprise European liaison, LaMont Olsen, and his administrative assistant, Betsy Kozak, are on board at the TRICARE Europe Office (TEO) at Sembach Air Base, Germany.

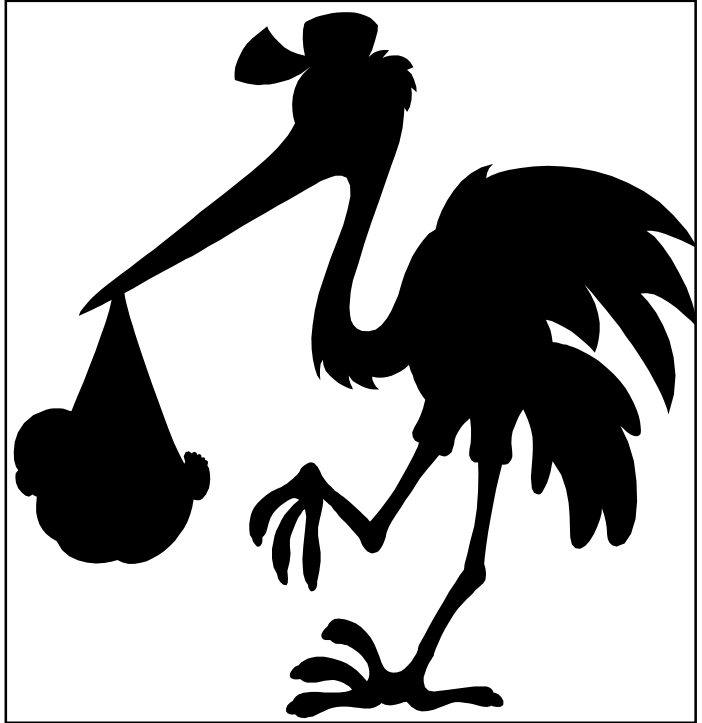
The Choctaw staff and the WIC-Overseas Program office staff are having great fun consolidating into one room. Teamwork is the name of our game, and the bottom line is "WIC Works," and the team plans to work hard making it work here in Europe.

The WIC-Overseas office serving Royal Air Force (RAF) Alconbury, RAF Upwood and RAF Molesworth opened with a ribbon cutting ceremony August 20. The new office in London opened its doors August 21.

Mike Bailey, Assistant Chief, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, and Matt Novick, managing officer of Choctaw Management Services Enterprises, along with two council members from the Choctaw Tribal Council, attended both ribbon cuttings. (Note: LTC Metcalf represented the TRICARE Europe Lead Agent, Army Brigadier General Richard Ursone at both ceremonies.) The buzz in both communities was positive, indicating the people there are glad WIC-Overseas is up and running.

Once again, several active duty and Reserve registered dietitians (RD) have joined forces with the WIC-Overseas office to work through the red tape of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) in Germany.

Lieutenant Colonels Jenny Roper and Barbara Fretwell, U.S. Army reservists who opened the Baumholder, Germany WIC-Overseas office, moved on to help with the Schweinfurt, Germany office. Adding to the effort in Schweinfurt were Army reservist LTC John Lute, RD, and 2Lt. Kimberly Leesberg, RD, a U.S. Air Force reservist. The two opened the site and have continued to provide needed support while Department of Defense contractor personnel



approve the Choctaw staff. Approval for the staff is expected in the next two weeks.

LTC Susan Keller, RD, Army Reserve, came on active duty recently to set-up and open the Vilseck, Germany, WIC-Overseas office. The office opened August 24, and Navy CDR Joanne Basler, RD, has joined LTC Keller to facilitate the enrollment process.

The WIC-Overseas offices at Vicenza and Aviano, Italy, and Keflavik, Iceland, are scheduled to open within the next 45 days. Timelines for these openings are based on site readiness, hiring staffs, local government approvals and clearances, and office setup and training. WIC-Overseas offices are scheduled to continue opening at a steady pace until all 45 Phase II sites are open, which is currently scheduled for completion by November 2002.

The WIC-Overseas project is a true Tri-Service project with active duty Navy and Air Force along with Army reservists working side by side to stand up sites. Many thanks from the TRICARE Europe Office for the tremendous support and dedication shown by members of all three services and from the local communities.

**Did you know...** Halloween was originally called All Hallows' Eve which means the evening before All Saints' Day? "Hallow" is an Old English word for "saint." Here's hoping your candy bags are filled this year!

## FEEDBACK:

**Editor's Note:** The information in this column features frequently asked questions from beneficiaries and the answers provided by the TRICARE Europe Office.

**Question:** I have heard that there is a TRICARE nurse available 24 hours a day, and was wondering how I can get that number. Any help you can provide would be great.

**Answer:** The Health Care Information Line (HCIL) is available 24 hours a day. When calling the HCIL, you'll speak with a specially trained nurse who will advise you on all your health care concerns. There is also an Audio Health Library, providing information on a variety of health-related topics.

A listing of the currently published phone numbers follows. Just look for your country and dial the toll free number:

Belgium: 0800-71920  
Denmark: 800-17357  
Germany: 0800-825-1600  
Greece: 008-001-1815-3044  
Iceland: 800-9001 then call 1-888-866-7942.  
Italy: 800-877660  
Netherlands: 0800-0227944  
Norway: 800-12635  
Portugal (Azores): call 0800-800128 then dial 1-888-866-7943.  
Spain: 900-93-1193  
Turkey: 00-800-13815-9042  
United Kingdom: 0800-896409  
United States: 1-888-866-7943

## Promotions mean O-5 for 2

by Jack Harrison  
Editor

Two members of the TRICARE Europe Office staff were recently informed they were selected for promotion to the O-5 paygrade.

Navy LCDR Steve Keener, assigned to TEO Regional Operations as Director of Remote Site Health Care, was notified in July that he'd be moving up a grade, becoming a commander.

"I'm excited about this promotion," Keener said. "Becoming a Navy Commander is very important to me."

Currently, Keener is responsible for TRICARE as it is applied at remote sites throughout the TRICARE Europe footprint.

Air Force Maj. Tom Haines, Chief of Regional Operations at TEO, got word of his promotion to Lieutenant Colonel during a video-teleconference



TEO PAO photo by Bonita Ducharme

The newest TRICARE Europe Office O-5s are Major Tom Haines (left), chief of Regional Operations, and LCDR Steve Keener, TEO Regional Operations director of Remote Site Health Care.

with the Air Force Deputy Surgeon General, Maj. Gen. James Rodebush on October 2.

"I owe this promotion to my great family and great co-workers," Maj. Haines said to the staff at TEO. He quipped, "This pay raise will help me buy that new car I've always wanted."

## Air Force official visits TEO, talks optimization

by Lt. Col. Liz Robison  
Chief, TEO Health Care Operations

Brigadier General Gary Murray, commander of the Air Force Medical Operation Agency, visited the TRICARE Europe Office (TEO) at Sembach Air Base, Germany, September 7.

General Murray, who is also the Air Force's Assistant Surgeon General for Dental, was in Europe touring Air Force Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs).

During his visit with members of the TEO staff, the General was given an overview of TRICARE Europe, focusing on TEO's role in Military Health System Optimization. This is a key fo-

cus for the General as he works to spread the word to the force about Primary Care Optimization and its importance for the Air Force Medical Service.

There are many projects TEO supports regarding optimization efforts. One such project is the Open Access pilot project spearheaded by TEO's Medical Director, Army COL Robert Larsen. The program supports two areas: continuity of care management, and recapturing care back into the MTFs.

Brig. Gen. Murray expressed his interest in this project, explaining the need to be able to show positive results in the effort to meet the healthcare needs of our people at the primary care management level.

# Naples Naval Hospital blends care, culture

by ENS Christian Di Mercurio

Head, Managed Care, Naval Hospital Naples, Italy

The antique beauty of Italy surrounds the U.S. Naval Hospital (USNH) Naples with picturesque splendor and a unique Neapolitan style. The people of Naples have a warm character and the city's charm will welcome you.

USNH Naples offers most "big-hospital" services in a community hospital setting. Supporting over 100 different commands and activities in the Naples, Gaeta, La Maddalena military communities, the total population fluctuates around 15,000.

The bulk of the community is Navy. However, USNH Naples supports Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and NATO personnel. USNH Naples also serves U.S. civilians, Department of Defense and State employees, and family members throughout the region.

USNH Naples provides many services: Emergency Medicine, Family Practice, Obstetrics/Gynecology, Internal Medicine, Behavioral Health, Counseling and Assistance Center, Audiology, Pediatrics, Orthopedic Surgery, General Surgery, Health Promotions, Occupational Health, Ophthalmology & Optometry, Physical Therapy and Nutrition. The three area branch clinics at Capodichino, Gaeta and La Maddalena support the USNH Naples mission by providing a Family Practice model of care.

The Naples region Preferred Provider Network augments services provided at USNH Naples. The network consists of 44 providers in the fields of: Cardiology, Dermatology, ENT, MRI, Gastroenterology, OB/GYN, Neurosurgery, Ophthalmology, Nephrology, Orthopedics, Pediatrics, Psychiatry, Urology, General Surgery and several subspecialists.

Our special relationship and agreements with our selected providers welcome our patients with open arms of excellent care. USNH Naples Managed Care Team



Photo courtesy of USNH Naples

**The U.S. Naval Hospital Naples sits in the shadows of the hills around Naples, Italy, and is this quarter's spotlighted treatment facility.**

provides professional administrative support and is dedicated to quality customer service. We have two front-line liaisons with the network, providing scheduling, translations and superb customer service at every encounter.

Our two drivers navigate patients through Neapolitan streets. Our Stork Nest coordinator assists expectant mothers and families from remote areas, providing a comfortable living space until they deliver. Besides two Health Benefits Advisers (HBA), USNH Naples also has HBAs in Gaeta, and La Maddalena supporting our remote sites.

The Naples community is currently undergoing the largest quality-of-life improvement project in Europe, called the Naples Improvement Initiative. Construction is nearly 45 percent complete on a new USNH Naples facility located at the Naval Support Site in Gricignano, just outside Naples. The new hospital is scheduled for completion in the Fall of 2002.

Bella Napoli, a great place to serve our military's mission under our motto, "Readiness Now, Health Always." *Buona Fortuna!*

**A**TTENTION HBAs: Whenever a provider is overpaid or paid incorrectly, the money is required to be paid back to Wisconsin Physicians Service (WPS). The Department of Defense and WPS prefer these paybacks be made by check, which should be made payable to WPS/CHAMPUS. If a check cannot be issued, an electronic wire transfer can be made using the following information, which was updated October 1. Please insure the provider in-

cludes the claim number when wiring funds:

RECIPIENT BANK: M&I Marshall & Ilseley Bank, Milwaukee, WI, USA; Swift: MARL 44; TELEX: TRT 190470 Maril Mil.

FINAL RECIPIENT BANK: M&I Madison Bank, Madison, WI, USA; ABA#: 075911205; Account name: Wisconsin Physicians Service/CHAMPUS; Active Duty account #: 57-24697; Family member account #: 212-94009.